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Vor allen Dingen müssen deutsche Verse ganz genau nach dem Rhythmus gelesen werden können. Nur durch konstante Lesepflege erreicht man auch die möglichst schnelle Beseitigung der gewöhnlichsten Fehler: r, l, z und die Umlaute.

Ich fürchte, dass der Industrialismus mit seiner sinnlosen Tendenz zur Erleichterung des physischen Wohllebens sich auch in die Schulen eingeschlichen hat. Man sehe sich nur die Reklame für Schulbücher an: Alles leicht, mühelos, ohne Zeitvergeudung, spielend etc. Ich scheue mich nicht, mit allem Nachdruck zu erklären, dass das der Anfang vom Ende ist. Schulen sind keine Theater, die möglichst viele Besucher zählen wollen. Und wer das Wort vom Schweiss, den die Götter dem Menschen gesetzt, durch eine neue Methodik zu nichte machen will, ist entweder nur Geschäftsmann oder nur naiv. Mit Pädagogik haben aber beide nichts zu tun.

Scheuen wir uns also nicht, das Beste der alten Methoden im neuen Gewande wieder erscheinen zu lassen. Ein durch Kommerzialisismus verseuchtes Publikum glaubt vielleicht, wir Lehrer haben, da man ja Schulgeld bezahlt, nur die Aufgabe, dem stillsitzenden Schüler seine Ware in Form von schmackhaften Magenpulvern einzugiessen, die man eben nur herunterzuschlucken braucht. Ach nein! Soweit sind wir noch nicht. Wappnen wir uns und führen wir die lieben Kindlein ohne chronische Furcht vor geistiger Überbürdung durch die Wüsten des Sprachunterrichts — dazu gehören ganz gewiss auch die Vokabelreihen. Der Erfolg aber krönt dann doch das Werk. Amerika ist augenblicklich das einzige Land der Erde, in dem körperliche und geistige Vernachlässigung und Verschlappung zu ernster nationaler Gefahr zu werden drohen. Eins ist not. Es ist das Wort des Pädagogen Ziegler an die deutsche Lehrerschaft: „Mehr Eisen ins Blut.“

The Merits of the Direct Method.¹

Professor Hermann Almstedt, University of Missouri.

In reviewing a recent History of German Literature,² Richard M. Meyer throws off this felicitous phrase:

„Die *Methode* bleibt die Brille,
die Hauptsache sind doch immer die *Augen*.“

Meyer means that the manner of presenting the material is acceptable because the author had a good eye for the fundamental point of view;

¹ Paper read before the German Division of the Missouri Society of Teachers of English and of Modern Languages at the Missouri State Teachers' Association, Saint Louis, November 7, 1913.

² R. M. Meyer in *Wiener Freie Presse* (1913) in a review of Joseph Nadler's *Literaturgeschichte der deutschen Stämme und Landschaften*.

that, tho there may be quarrel or difference of opinion about the manner and technique, yet the principle involved is true. This quotation struck me as not only appropriate, but highly significant for the introductory paragraph of my paper. You all know thoroughly well how threadbare is the theme of method, how we Modern Language teachers especially have at times grown red in our faces pleading for this or for that mode, or manner, or technique, or method of teaching. I hope to make clear that method in the sense of technique is merely secondary, and is an aid for presenting what logically precedes it, namely the principle involved. That there may be various ways or methods basing on one principle, I trust, no one will deny. Coming now again to the subject of this paper: it is from this fundamental point of view that I wish to regard *method*, and thus shall discuss with you not the merits of the direct *method*, but what it would be much better to call the Direct *Principle*.

In thus discriminating between method as technique and method as principle I do not wish to be understood as undervaluing in any way the importance of technique. Everything that is done and performed has a technique to it, from the efforts of a shoeblack to the creations of a Raffaello, so that a beautifully polisht shoe reflects the successful method or technique as much as a Sistina or a della Sedia. Every art has a technique, and every great artist is a master of his technique. But before his technique and conditioned by it lies a conception, an idea, a *principle*, if you will. Thus it is clear that principle and method are complementary and necessary parts of a whole. A principle by itself is a lonesome spectacle of abstraction, and just as truly is method alone inconceivable.

Teaching is at the same time a science and an art, and both of these aspects of his work the superior teacher of Modern Languages takes into account. He realizes that his subject has a science behind it and that there are principles involved in the imparting of it which he is eager to understand and reveal; and he also realizes that an appeal is made to him as an artist to select wisely and create in the mind of his student the image that he himself holds. My paper will deal with this dual consideration in respect to the Direct Method.

The Direct Method is not a new revelation. It is certainly as old as Luther's time, and those of us who have kept in touch with the literature know that for the last thirty or more years it has been knocking at our doors for admission. We have heard the voice: shall we ignore it?

What is the Direct Method? Stated in the extreme way, it is the direct mode of learning a foreign language, without the intervention of the vernacular. The implications of this very simple definition are: a good pronunciation, oral work, inductive grammar, genuine reading, an emphasis on the *realien*, reproductive work rather than translation; or,

stated in other terms: it is implied that in language instruction the appeal to the student should proceed in the order of ear, speech, and eye. If it is remembered that the traditional practice employs just the reverse order, namely: eye, speech, ear, it becomes clear at once how vitally the new order will affect the process of learning a language. The reason, or reasons, for the reversal of the old order will be taken up later. For the present I may be permitted to play around the main features of the new method, without any attempt at exhaustive and over-detailed explanations. The literature on the subject of the Direct Method is elsewhere easily accessible.³

First and foremost among the demands of the supporters of the Direct Method is a good pronunciation. In response to this demand grew the importance of previous phonetic training of the teacher and, in general, the science of speech-sounds as involved in the oral use of a foreign language. This young science was made to contribute to a practical end, and its contribution has enriched and promoted the actual values of language-study. Whether the student learns phonetic script or not is not so important as that he becomes phonetically-minded, that he acquires a conscience on matters of pronunciation. When, for instance, the student—and for that matter some of our teachers,—feel that they have violated an idiomatic point in German when they fail to give initial vowels their due glottal click, then we have made progress in phonetic consciousness.

It was only natural, then, that with the new interest in pronunciation the discipline of *speaking* the foreign language should become stressed, and this emphasis grew out of the conviction that a language is primarily a matter of living sounds, and only secondarily a record of printed or written letters on the page. Just here we are touching upon one of the mainly contested points of the Direct Method, namely upon its demand that the foreign language shall be used orally in the classroom and that students should be taught to *use* it. The other day I chanced upon this remark of Emperor William to the Prussian Kultusminister:

„Bei Neueren Sprachen ist mit besonderem Nachdruck Gewandtheit im Sprechen anzustreben.“

But, of course, say the opponents, that is in Germany and not in the United States. Yet to learn a language by using it, and especially a modern foreign language by using it *viva voce* in the communication of ideas seems to me a sound logical and pedagogical principle in thorough agreement with all of our present educational theory—which demands that students learn by doing.

Further: it was only natural, with the new interest in pronunciation and speaking as a vital discipline, that translation from the foreign language and into it again should receive a new interpretation. It was

³ Charles H. Handschin, *The Teaching of Modern Languages*. U. S. Bureau of Educ. Bulletin 1913. No. 3. Whole Number 510.

pointed out—a fact which everyone everywhere admits as a truism—that translation really is an art which, tho it should not be neglected, is most truly apprehended when the student can balance nicely the idioms of the two languages concerned in his translation. Instead of the unnatural process of translation there came into use oral and written reproductive exercises on the text, thus sustaining and enriching the feeling for the foreign idiom. Translations are not discarded, but given their natural place in the economic scale of values. That with such a mode of procedure the actual reading of the foreign text becomes really intelligent and genuine, as a natural consequence of these previous disciplines, need be only suggested in passing.

The living reality of the foreign sounds in the classroom led naturally to a stressing of other living and vital matters connected with the language studied. In this way an interest in the customs, habits, institutions and general life of the foreign people arose. And that a high idealism of international understanding and friendship moved the early promoters to plead for the so-called *realien*, is a matter of history.⁴ In this connection may I call attention to a real contribution to honest and efficient instruction? I mean Professor Kullmer's "2x3 Diagonal Method."⁵

And finally, in this atmosphere of naturalness it was only to be expected that grammar should be studied inductively; i. e. that the living reading-text should yield the grammatical abstractions which we usually call rules. Grammar was and is not excluded from the program of the Direct Method, only it, too, receives a more natural and vital interpretation.⁶

This, in brief, describes the main features of the Direct Method and perhaps you will agree with me, even now, that it were better called: the *Direct Principle*. Of course, we understand that the accepted pedagogical concomitants in the use of any method whatsoever apply here also with the same cogency; namely, that accuracy, systematic and orderly procedure, drill, reviews etc., etc., are not given up. In fact, in the nature of this new procedure they gain a new life and a greater significance.

Underlying the appeal for the adoption of this point of view in Modern Language instruction is the recognition of the accepted scientific theory that language does not consist of letters, but of sounds; that the unit of speech is not the single word, but the complete sentence. Phonetics and psychology are the sponsors for this truth. It is an instructive fact to note what a new life has come into the study of the older dead

⁴ Wilhelm Viëtor, *Die Methodik des neusprachlichen Unterrichts*. Teubner, Leipzig, p. 45.

⁵ Kullmer, *2 x 3 Diagonal Method*. Kramer Publ. Co., Syracuse, N. Y.

⁶ C. Krause, *The Teaching of Grammar by the Direct Method*. Monatshefte für deutsche Sprache und Pädagogik XIII, 6.

periods of the language thru the phonetic injunction that the sound, and not the letter should be the point of departure. The Preface to Streitberg's first edition of his *Gotisches Elementarbuch* (1900) reads like this:

„Während Braunes gotische Grammatik
überall vom Buchstaben ausgeht, ist mein
Ausgangspunkt stets der Laut.“

Again, in our syntactic studies to-day the stress on the *sentence* as the unit of speech is settling controversial matters in a beautifully simple way. When the babe lisps its first *mama* it is speaking a complete sentence and not uttering merely a single, disconnected word.

Linguistic science is yielding us these fundamental laws; are we to try them on the dead only and leave the living modern period without the quickening influences of such clear thinking in language matters? Is it not about time that we diligently utilize in our practice the returns from scientific laboratories? Our age in its mechanical scientific aspect is doing that on every turn, and we in our field are willing to trudge along the self-same furrow with a growl and a grumble. What is all our scientific inquiry for, if not for a fuller, richer, and more intelligent mode of living? And applied to our case: what is the research in language for, if not for a fuller, richer, more intelligent, and therefore more efficient mode of teaching Modern Languages? No, the supporters of the Direct Method have no apologies to make. Science and common sense are on their side.

That there should be opposition to this reversal of the old order is only too natural. A new idea, even tho it be an old one reborn is compelled to fight for place and recognition. The life of truth will have it so. There certainly can be no quarrel with opposition that is vital and active. In fact, if the new scheme has virtue in it, like the Pelagian doctrine of good and evil, it will thrive by opposition. Some of the objections arise out of the misunderstanding that the Direct Method is the old Natural Method of several years ago; some quarrelings apply to matters of technique. One writer⁷ who on the whole pleads with a fine spirit for certain phases of learning a foreign language, dismisses all attempts at speaking it as loose talk and as “pap of empty minds”. So another argues that since students never really learn to speak a foreign language, it is a waste of time to attempt this discipline. Another: that inductive grammar-work leads to confusion; and again, and finally, another that since the Direct Method can not be accurately defined (what he means by “definition” I do not know!), he wants none of it.

My presentation thus far has, I hope, answered some or nearly all of these objections. If any remain, the rest of my paper will deal with them.

⁷ William A. Nitze, *The French Requirement for Entrance to the University*. Univ. of Chicago Magazine IV, 3. (1912).

I wish to turn now to that part of my subject which concerns itself with the functions of the teacher as an artist. We have observed that the teacher should be alive to the scientific aspect of his subject and it has been suggested that he should try to lay bare and understand the theory that underlies his actual technique of teaching. Our Teachers Colleges mean to inculcate the principles of teaching. A course in the principles of teaching, however, no more necessarily makes a successful teacher than a course in ethics necessarily makes a man good. And the reason is clear: the teacher needs not only to be a man who *knows*, but also one who does, who creates. In this sense, teaching is an art, and may I prejudge the whole case by saying that it is the finest of fine arts, because the material that the teacher shapes into form is one which possesses psychical reactions. And since in all art-creative work the personality of the artist counts for most, so in teaching the personality of the teacher will always be of supreme importance. Theory is always an abstraction, art is life, is living. Like every artist, the teacher expresses himself by a wise selection, and this art-function of selection varies with circumstances: the teacher, like the artist, should therefore have freedom of choice and opportunity to develop his own method, his own technique.

That the principles underlying the Direct Method quicken not only the student, but also give an opportunity for the teacher to realize himself, is not an idle claim of the reformers. It is true that the demands made upon the teacher by the Direct Method are greater than those made upon him by the old time grammar-translation procedure. But does this argue against its use, if the gain is greater? Perfect teachers are rare, like every other kind of perfection. Therefore, let us take heart and grow! A world without ideals is hardly worth living in. Even a teacher who thru circumstances does not control a thoro and complete speaking acquaintance with the language that he teaches can grow into a more vital use of it thru persistent effort and a strong will to achieve.

Already you will have gained some idea of the merits of the Direct Method. Allow me in just a short paragraph to attempt a summary of the chief advantages. What to me seems the most urgent recommendation is that it gives a really adequate interpretation of the aim of all language instruction which every instructor will promptly admit is the acquisition of a *feeling* for the language, or *Sprachgefühl*. Once more, the *ear* gets the recognition which has so long been denied it by the grammar-translation method. Like every good and workable hypothesis, the Direct Method is all-inclusive of all desirable disciplinary values and in its operation it creates interest which all educators to-day recognize as the foundation of efficient educational theory. We do best what we like to do, that in which we have an interest. Those who have worked in the spirit of the Direct Method will readily own that it creates a living interest, through the

psychological process of holding the attention and urging visualization; that it thus quickens not only the student, but also the teacher. If we need a motive for the better equipment of the latter, the Direct Method will furnish it; for it is a human trait that few of us are better than the imperatives thrust upon us, or exert a greater activity than is required by the problem we have to confront.

My own personal reason for urging the careful examination and final adoption of the Direct Method has grown out of my own experience, both as actual teacher and observer. Something is vitally wrong in our work when students can pass thru a four years' course of German instruction and can neither understand nor reply to, the simplest German sentence; when their composition-work is nothing short of what one writer calls a game of Lotto.⁸ That a great percentage of these students then go out as teachers and deepen within themselves and inculcate in others the unnatural habits and practices and send their products back to the University—this completing the vicious circle—these were some of the sad reflections that urged a remedy. The main reason, then, for a change was that the old would simply not do. It was the old complacent grammar-translation method which disguised itself under the more respectable name of Reading Method. It was such a convenient, easy, complacent way of instructing: the instructor affectionately clung to his chair thruout the hour, leisurely asking where the lesson began and then translating and growing wise over a few details in grammar or other relatively unimportant matters of the text. The only delight and interest came when the ten o'clock bell rang for the dismissal of the class in German.

Ladies and Gentlemen of the guild, it is time to be up and about and to be taking invoice. That Latin, and the classics generally, are losing in interest is not only due to our age which stresses immediately practical returns from study. The heated discussions going on in the Latin camp over the introduction of a more living and vital mode of teaching Latin are a matter of record.⁹ Latin furnishes a telling illustration of what happens when grammar-logic discipline usurps the place of the vital study of the language as a whole. To study Latin in that way was to study logic and philosophy rather than Latin. In a report on the unification of grammatical nomenclature we get a fine example of what an extreme grammar enthusiasm involves us in.¹⁰

An adoption of the Direct Method in the teaching of German in the schools of Missouri will mean a new life and a new inspiration. It will

⁸ George H. Danton, *Lotto or Composition*. Monatshefte für deutsche Sprache und Pädagogik, XIII, 107. (1912).

⁹ *Classical Weekly* VI, 33—159.

¹⁰ William Gardner Hale, *The Harmonizing of Grammatical Nomenclature*. Publications of the M. L. A., XXVI, p. 379.

slow up the dizzy speed of some teachers whose great ambition it is to read *Wilhelm Tell* and *Minna von Barnhelm* in the second year. It will frankly stress as the most desirable aim and object of the High School curriculum in German the easy and idiomatic acquisition of the foreign language as a key and leave, if not all literary study, then the greater part of it to the higher institutions of learning. It will mean essentially this injunction: Learn the language before you attempt to do much with the literature, especially with that period which lies a hundred years or more in the past. It will mean a change in the content of the entrance-examinations to the University, which will include thenceforth also an oral test in pronunciation, and demand besides a translation exercise, also a short theme in German.

I think we shall have done a fine day's work in the interests of a more rational mode of modern language instruction if we can achieve this end. If quality is your motto, and not quantity; if you realize that German is a *living modern* language and needs to be taught as such; then I think that this achievement is in sight. But whether it is depends upon you.

Berichte und Notizen.

I. Korrespondenzen.

Chicago.

In der *Februarversammlung* unseres *Vereins deutscher Lehrer* hielt Prof. Dr. Max Schmidhofer, ein Sohn unseres deutschen Schul-Paschas, einen höchst lehrreichen und interessanten Vortrag über Antitoxine. Er führte an der Hand von Illustrationen, die er während des Vortrages an die Tafel zeichnete, aus, wie kleine Krankheits-träger ins menschliche System eindringen, sich überraschend schnell vermehren und oftmals die grössten Verheerungen anrichten, wie es aber der medizinischen Wissenschaft gelungen sei, durch Einführung von Antitoxinen in den Körper diese kleinen Biester zu töten und unschädlich zu machen. Lebhafter Beifall folgte den Ausführungen des Redners.

Vor der *Germanistischen Gesellschaft* sprach Prof. Dr. Kuno Meyer, Lehrer der keltischen Sprache und Literatur an der Berliner Universität, über „The two Irelands“ — das Irland von einst und das von jetzt. Der Redner zog eine Parallele zwischen Elsass-Lothringen und dem heutigen Irland. Deutschland hat aus den erstgenannten Pro-

vinzen in einem Zeitraum von 44 Jahren ein blühendes, reiches Land gemacht, England hat Irland ausgesogen bis aufs Blut. Lange vor der Eroberung der Insel hat sich irische Kultur, irisches Wissen, irische Mission bis in die Schweiz erstreckt; irischer Handel und irische Produkte waren auf den Märkten der ganzen Welt bekannt. An den Universitäten Irlands studierte die Jugend aller Völker, prächtige Kirchen und Schulen bedeckten das Land; Ackerbau und Handel standen in hoher Blüte. Durch Englands Besitzergreifung fiel ein Reif auf die Entwicklung des Landes. Durch grausame Gesetze wurde nicht nur das Volk geknechtet, sondern in Unwissenheit getrieben, seiner Sprache, seiner Literatur, der Früchte seiner Kultur beraubt. Keine Massnahme, kein Verbrechen, kein Verrat waren für England zu schmutzig zur Erreichung seines Zweckes. Nicht nur sind Millionen kümmerlich zugrunde gegangen, andere Millionen ausgewandert, sondern die übriggebliebenen sind geistig zurückgegangen und haben mit ihrer Volkssprache auch das Bewusstsein ihrer früheren Grösse und Bedeutung